

**National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, DC 20594**

Brief of Accident

Adopted 05/13/2003

DEN03LA010		10/19/2002		Watkins, CO		Aircraft Reg No. N219DF		Time (Local): 12:41 MDT			
Make/Model:		Hildebrandt / Rutan/Defiant				Fatal		Serious		Minor/None	
Engine Make/Model:		Lycoming / O-360-A1A				Crew		0		0	
Aircraft Damage:		Substantial				Pass		0		0	
Number of Engines:		2									
Operating Certificate(s):		None									
Type of Flight Operation:		Personal									
Reg. Flight Conducted Under:		Part 91: General Aviation									
Last Depart. Point:		Watkins, CO				Condition of Light:		Day			
Destination:		Local Flight				Weather Info Src:		Weather Observation Facility			
Airport Proximity:		On Airport				Basic Weather:		Visual Conditions			
Airport Name:		Front Range				Lowest Ceiling:		None			
Runway Identification:		26				Visibility:		10.00 SM			
Runway Length/Width (Ft):		8000 / 100				Wind Dir/Speed:		050 / 003 Kts			
Runway Surface:		Asphalt				Temperature (°C):		12			
Runway Surface Condition:		Dry				Precip/Obscuration:		None / None			
Pilot-in-Command		Age: 37				Flight Time (Hours)					
Certificate(s)/Rating(s)						Total All Aircraft:		575			
Private; Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land						Last 90 Days:		2			
Instrument Ratings						Total Make/Model:		22			
None						Total Instrument Time:		7			

After taking off on runway 26 and turning onto the crosswind leg, the pilot noticed the rear engine oil pressure was dropping. After turning onto the downwind leg, the pilot reduced power on the rear engine to idle. When he was on final approach and felt assured of landing on the runway, he shut down the rear engine. When he retarded the throttle on the front engine, he noticed power was not decreasing. He secured the front engine by turning off the ignition and glided to a landing but he forgot to lower the nose landing gear. The airplane touched down, the nose struck the runway, and the airplane skidded to a halt on the runway. The airplane's nose section, including the "Rhino" rudder, was crushed and several fuselage bulkheads were buckled. The front engine throttle cable was found broken, and there was a broken oil pressure sensor line in the rear engine.

Brief of Accident (Continued)

DEN03LA010				
File No. 13324	10/19/2002	Watkins, CO	Aircraft Reg No. N219DF	Time (Local): 12:41 MDT

Occurrence #1: AIRFRAME/COMPONENT/SYSTEM FAILURE/MALFUNCTION
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Findings

1. (F) LUBRICATING SYSTEM,OIL LINE - FAILURE,TOTAL

Occurrence #2: AIRFRAME/COMPONENT/SYSTEM FAILURE/MALFUNCTION
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - FINAL APPROACH

Findings

2. (F) THROTTLE/POWER LEVER,CABLE - FAILURE,TOTAL

Occurrence #3: WHEELS UP LANDING
Phase of Operation: LANDING

Findings

3. (C) CHECKLIST - NOT USED - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (F) DIVERTED ATTENTION - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. LANDING GEAR,NOSE GEAR
6. (C) GEAR EXTENSION - NOT PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Findings Legend: (C) = Cause, (F) = Factor

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows.
the pilot's failure to use the checklist, resulting in his forgetting to lower the nose landing gear. Contributing factors included the pilot's attention being diverted by the loss of oil pressure on the rear engine due to a broken oil pressure sensor line, and a broken throttle cable on the front engine, requiring an airborne shutdown using the ignition switches.